



From: The Koch Concerns Coalition at John Jay College of Criminal Justice

To: Coalition Members, Supporters, and The John Jay College Community

Date: 01/09/18

Re: 12/21/17 Meeting with Pres. Mason and Faculty Senate

Dear Friends, Supporters, Colleagues, and Members of the College Community,

As part of our continuing effort to expose and resist Koch intrusion at our college, Coalition representatives met with President Karol Mason, members of her administration, and representatives of the college Faculty Senate on Thursday 12/21/17. In attendance were **Pres. Mason** & her administration members (V.P. **Laura Gynns**; Dean **Anthony Carpi**; Interim Provost **Anne Lopes**); Koch Concerns Coalition members **Matthew B. Johnson**, **Jerry Markowitz**, **Phil Yanos**, and **Blanche Cook**; Faculty Senate representatives **Michael Brownstein** & **Karen Kaplowitz**; and Professor **Maria Volpe** at the invitation of Pres. Mason.

Following introductions and a brief review of prior meetings and correspondence, Pres. Mason announced she was willing to forego solicitation of funds from any Koch entities and she hoped this would settle the issue at the college. Pres. Mason stated she arrived at this decision out of respect for the strong opposition to Koch presence at John Jay College expressed by the coalition as well as other members of the college community. Pres. Mason stressed the importance of raising funds for student success initiatives at our college. She explained she regarded Koch sources as a potential contributor to this fundraising effort. However, Koch sources were only one among a very large number of potential funding sources to which she planned to appeal. Pres. Mason indicated that since she could not launch an effective broad-based funding appeal with the Koch controversy lingering at the college, she would agree not to solicit funds from Koch sources. Pres. Mason stated she was in the process of formulating her fundraising plan and wanted to know if there were objections to any other potential funders.

Pres. Mason indicated she was unwilling to issue a formal written statement to the college community addressing these issues. Through the course of the meeting it was expressed that such a statement could potentially interfere with fundraising from other sources who might perceive the college as unwilling to accept donations without some sort of scrutiny.

Pres. Mason noted that while she would not raise funds from the Kochs, there would be no restriction on individual faculty members receiving funding from Koch or other funders. It was affirmed that at present the college has received Koch funding via a grant solicited by the Center for Media, Crime, & Justice; one professor's research project; and also limited funding support

for the ‘Smart On Crime’ Conference. Pres. Mason stated individual faculty members and center staff will remain eligible to apply for funding from Koch or other sources.

Pres. Mason indicated the college would continue to list internships and student placements with Koch affiliated organizations as such placements with other organizations are also listed for our students. It was stated that as a college that receives federal funds, it would improper to exclude Koch affiliated placements.

Pres. Mason indicated she was unwilling to establish a committee or task force to draft guidelines to evaluate donor funding, influence, ethics, and conflicts of interest as our coalition proposed. Pres. Mason indicated her first year as president of the college provides a unique opportunity to raise funds and her project could not afford to be delayed for another semester while guidelines are drafted. Further President Mason indicated that she would not accept funding that undermined “academic freedom”, faculty control over curriculum, or personnel actions. Pres. Mason also indicated she believed the college mission statement provides additional guidance.

We genuinely appreciate Pres. Mason’s willingness to listen and consider our views on Koch funding and donor influence issues. We welcome and accept her pledge not to solicit funds from Koch entities. We are grateful for the vision and leadership she has demonstrated in proposing this agreement. We also acknowledge and appreciate the valuable contributions the college Faculty Senate provided in facilitating this resolution. We firmly believe the pledge to forego solicitation of Koch funding is in the best interest of our students, faculty, administration, and entire community.

We remain concerned about the broader issue of donor influence and the fact that there are not specific criteria/guidelines at present. From the beginning of our correspondence with Pres. Mason on these issues, we stated it was not our intention to limit individual faculty members grant funding. Our concern was then, and remains, the college administration partnering/affiliating with Koch entities in a manner that was detrimental to academic integrity and the reputation of our college.

While we accept this agreement proposed by Pres. Mason, given the absence of guidelines/criteria to assess donor contributions and influence, as well as the potentially unlimited channels for funding to faculty or college centers, we need to discuss these considerations further within our coalition and the college community. Undue donor influence remains a major consideration especially in this current era when overt and covert attacks on funding public higher education are advanced by influential and well financed sources. As we articulated in our 12/14/17 **No Koch on Campus - update**, “the Koch’s political/philosophical agenda … has been the major driving force in the reduction of funding to education in general and higher education in particular. In New York, and across our nation, an entire generation of young adults (and/or their parents) carries this burden in the form of historically unprecedented educational debt. It is unjust and unwise to lend the good name of our educational institution and endeavors to a group that has worked to undermine the support, integrity, and independence of public higher education”.

Finally, we express our sincere thanks to the many faculty members, students, and others who stood up to challenge the Koch presence at our college and lend support to a resolution. We have all been enhanced by our collaboration.

Respectfully for the Koch Concerns Coalition Representatives,

Matthew B. Johnson, Jerry Markowitz, Phil Yanos, & Blanche Cook.